



2016-2017 My First Books Requirements and Guidelines

What is My First Books?

My First Books (MFB) is a Read to Me outreach program designed to give underserved children the opportunity to take home age-appropriate books and build a home library. For many participating children these are the first quality books they can call their own.

My First Books targets children from birth to age six who are unlikely to have many books in their homes, have a library card, or utilize library services. The program provides an age-appropriate paperback book every month for nine months (September – May) for each participating child (infants and toddlers receive a board book rather than a paperback book). My First Books parents receive a monthly newsletter, *The Bookworm*, which suggests tips and strategies to support early literacy skills at home.

In addition to providing children with books, a goal of the My First Book program is to encourage contact between participating families and librarians to promote local library services.

Each year the number of children the program can support is dependent on the Idaho Commission for Libraries' fiscal budget. The range is typically 2000 – 3000 children, and the number of libraries typically ranges from 25 – 40 libraries.

Desired Program Outcomes:

1. Participating children increase their access to books by starting a home library.
2. More underserved families have library cards and use the public library.
3. Participating children increase early literacy skills.
4. Parents of participating children increase their knowledge about early literacy.
5. Parents of participating children increase home literacy activities.
6. Libraries strengthen community partnerships.

Program Eligibility:

- Participating libraries must be a **publicly-funded public library**. *School libraries are not eligible to apply for this program. School libraries may apply for a School Library Access to Books minigrant if they have not yet received one:* <http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/read-to-me>
- Each library must have a **community partner** who provides a child care or education program for “underserved” children; that is, children who are unlikely to have many books at home and/or are not as likely to utilize library services, such as:
 - Children in lower-income families
 - English Language Learners
 - Children of teen parents
 - Children in daycare
 - Children with developmental disabilities
 - Refugee children
 - Children living in rural areas in which the library is a great distance away
- Community Partner must offer **consistent enrollment** for child care or preschool services from September through May. Drop-in programs or summer programs do not qualify (i.e., Boys and Girls Club, Migrant Seasonal Head Start, etc.)*
**You may apply for the Year Round Underserved Program to give books to summer or drop-in types of organizations, <http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/read-to-me>.*
- Library must agree to participate fully (see program requirements below) in the program from August 2016 – May 2017.
- New participants are expected to attend a half-day training in August 2016 (TBA). Returning participants may attend a one-hour online training in August 2016 (TBA).

Program Requirements:

A) Book Distribution:

- Books should go to the same children every month.
- **All children** in the classroom (school, daycare or preschool) must be included in the monthly distributions, rather than just a subset of identified children.
- Monthly book distribution and storytime/book activity is by library staff (paid or volunteer), face-to-face with children (no mailing of books or leaving them at a center or classroom to be delivered later).

- Only the designated titles may be given to the designated age group during the designated month.

B) Early Literacy Event:

- Each library site must provide one **workshop for parents of participating children** or one **family event held for My First Books families** that focuses on early literacy skills.

C) Evaluation:

- Distribute and collect the **"My First Books Parent Survey"** at the end of the nine-month program.
- Submit a Final Report and parent surveys by **June 1, 2017**.

How to apply:

- Publicly-funded public libraries: Fill out the Public Library Application, available on the Read to Me website: <http://libraries.idaho.gov/landing/read-to-me>.
- Each community partner with whom you plan to work must complete and sign a Community Partner Information sheet. (Please confirm age groups with each partner using the age group guidelines below.)
- Application must be signed by your Library Director or Branch Manager.
- Submit application, three copies of application, and all community partner information sheets, as one submission package, to ICfL by **April 22, 2016**.

To consider before applying:

Age group guidelines: The three age groups for the My First Books program are:

- Birth through age two (board books), infants and toddlers up to 35 months
- Preschool, ages 3 through 5, have not yet entered kindergarten
- Kindergarten, ages 5-6, attending district or private kindergarten program

Needs assessment: Question #2 on the application asks how participating in this program will fulfill a need in your community. You must include **data and statistics** for your demographic area. A list of sources is provided at the top of question #2. Choose at least one of these sources and include the data within your narrative response. The more sources and data you include, the stronger your needs assessment will be. Please do not send printouts of data, rather include the information as part of your response.

Other considerations:

Libraries are encouraged to sign families up for public library cards. When a community partner (like Head Start) serves families outside a library jurisdiction, some accommodation for nonresident library cards should be considered. Applications that include accommodations are ranked higher than those that require MFB families to pay a fee for nonresident cards.

Community Partner elementary schools that have received an ICfL "School Library Access to Books Minigrant" will be ranked lowest, as those children now have increased access to books.

How applications are weighted:

Applications will be reviewed by Read to Me Coordinators and other ICfL staff using a weighted scoring system. My First Books applicants will be chosen on the basis of their overall application and needs assessment.

High priority will be given to public libraries who:

- 1) Have never participated; who have participated for fewer than three years; have not participated in the past three years.
- 2) Are partnering with teen parent programs and/or providers who serve preschool children.
- 3) Can provide library cards to MFB families at no cost or very limited cost.

Applicants will be notified on the status of their application at the end of May/beginning of June. If funding is limited, application requests may be partially approved.